The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE NATIVITY

ONE mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands the bare and neglected chapel known by the name of "the Angel to the Shepherds." It is built over the traditional site of the fields where, in the beautiful language of St. Luke, "there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," and to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord.

On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsies; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the "light and sound in the darkness and stillness," and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village; and those shepherds, amid the chill dews of a winter night, were guarding their flocks from the wolf and the robber in fields where Ruth, their Saviour's ancestress, had gleaned, sick at heart, amid the alien corn, and David, the despised and youngest son of a numerous family, had followed the ewes great with young.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will."

It might have been expected that Christian piety would have marked the spot by splendid memorials, and enshrined the rude grotto of the shepherds in the marble and mosaics of some stately church. But, instead of this, the Chapel of the Herald Angels is a mere rude crypt; and as the traveler descends the broken steps which lead from the olive-grove into its dim recess, he can hardly persuade himself that he is in a consecrated place. Yet a half-unconscious sense of fitness has, perhaps, contributed to this apparent neglect. The poverty of the chapel harmonizes well with the humble toil of those whose radiant vision it is intended to commemorate.

"Come now! let us go unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord made known to us," said the shepherds, when those angel songs had ceased to break the starry silence. Their way would lead them up the terraced hill, and through the moonlit gardens of Bethlehem, until they reached the summit of the gray ridge on which the little town is built. On that summit stood the village inn. The khan, or caravanserai, of a Syrian village, at that date, was probably identical, in its appearance and accommodation, with those which still exist in modern Palestine. A khan is a low structure, built of rough stones, and generally only a single story in height. It consists for the most part of a square inclosure, in which the cattle can be tied up in safety for the night, and an arched recess for the accommodation of travelers. The *leewan*, or paved floor of the recess, is raised a foot or two above the level of the courtyard. A large khan might contain a series of such recesses, which are, in fact, low small rooms with no front wall to them. They are, of course, perfectly public; everything that takes place in them is visible to every person in the khan. They are also totally devoid of even the most ordinary furniture. The traveler may bring his own carpet if he likes, may sit cross-legged upon it for his meals, and may lie upon it at night. As a rule, too, he must bring his own food, attend to his own cattle, and draw his own water from the neighboring spring. He would

neither expect nor require attendance, and would pay only the merest trifle for the advantage of shelter, safety, and a floor on which to lie. But if he chanced to arrive late, and the *leewans* were all occupied by earlier guests, he would have no choice but to be content with such accommodation as he could find in the courtyard below, and secure for himself and his family such small amount of cleanliness and decency as are compatible with an unoccupied corner of the filthy area, which must be shared with horses, mules and camels. The litter, the closeness, the unpleasant smell of the crowded animals, the unwelcome intrusion of the pariah dogs, the necessary society of the very lowest hangers-on of the caravanserai, are adjuncts to such a position which can only be realized by any traveler in the East who happens to have been placed in similar circumstances.

In Palestine it not unfrequently happens that the entire khan is one of those innumerable caves which abound in the limestone rocks of its central hills. Such seems to have been the case at the little town of Bethlehem-Ephratah, in the land of Judah. Justin Martyr, who lived less than a century after the time of our Lord, places the scene of the nativity in a cave. Over this cave has risen the Church and Convent of the Nativity, and it was in a cave close beside it that one of the most learned, eloquent, and holy of the Fathers of the Church—the great St. Jerome, to whom we owe the received Latin translation of the Bible—spent thirty of his declining years in study, and fast, and prayer.

From their northern home at Nazareth, Joseph, the village carpenter, had made his way along the wintry roads with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. Fallen as were their fortunes, they were both of the house and lineage of David, and they were traversing a journey of eighty miles to the village which had been the home of their great ancestor while he was still a ruddy shepherd lad, tending his flocks upon the lonely hills. The object of this toilsome journey was to enroll their names as members of the house of David in a census which had been ordered by the Emperor Augustus. In deference to Jewish prejudices, any infringement of which was the certain signal for violent tumults and insurrection, it was not carried out in the ordinary Roman manner, at each person's place of residence, but, according to Jewish custom, at the town to which their family originally belonged. The Jews still clung to their genealogies and to the memory of long-extinct tribal relations; and though the journey was a weary and distasteful one, the mind of Joseph may well have been consoled by the remembrance of that heroic descent which would now be authoritatively recognized, and by the glow of those Messianic hopes to which the marvelous circumstances of which he was almost the sole depositary would give a tenfold intensity.

Traveling in the East is a very slow and leisurely affair, and was likely to be still more so if, as is probable, the country was at that time agitated by political animosities. Others who were traveling on the same errand would easily have passed them on the road, and when, after toiling up the steep hillside, by David's well, they arrived at the khan, covering perhaps the very ground on which, one thousand years before, had stood the hereditary house of Boaz, of Jesse, and of David—every *leewan* was occupied. The enrollment had drawn so many strangers to the little town that "there was no room for them in the inn." In the rude limestone grotto attached to it as a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the food and rest of the cattle, weary with their day's journey, far from home, in the midst of strangers, in the chilly winter night—in circumstances so devoid of all earthly comfort or splendor that it is impossible to imagine a humbler nativity—Christ was born.

Distant but a few miles towered the palace-fortress of the Great Herod. The magnificent houses of his friends and courtiers crowded around its base. The humble wayfarers, as they passed near it, might have heard the hired and voluptuous minstrelsy with which its feasts were celebrated, or the shouting of the rough mercenaries whose arms enforced obedience to its despotic lord. But the true King of the Jews—the rightful Lord of the Universe—was not to be found in palace or fortress. They who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. The cattle-stables of the lowly caravanserai were a more fitting birthplace for Him who came to reveal that the soul of the greatest monarch was no dearer or greater in God's sight than the soul of His meanest slave; for Him who had not where to lay His head; for Him who, from His cross of shame, was to rule the world.

Guided by the lamp which usually swings from the center of a rope hung across the entrance of the khan, the shepherds made their way to the inn of Bethlehem, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. Such glories as the simple shepherds saw were seen only by the eye of faith; and all which met their gaze was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life, and a young mother, of whom *they* could not know that she was wedded maid and virgin wife, with an Infant Child, whom, since there were none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling-clothes. The light that shined in the darkness was no physical, but a spiritual beam; the Dayspring from on high, which had now visited mankind, dawned only in a few faithful and humble hearts.

And the Gospels, always truthful and bearing on every page that simplicity which is the stamp

of honest narrative, indicate this fact without comment. There is in them nothing of the exuberance of marvel, and mystery and miracle, which appears alike in the Jewish imaginations about their coming Messiah, and in the apocryphal narratives about the Infant Christ. There is no more decisive criterion of their absolute credibility as simple histories than the marked and violent contrast which they offer to all the spurious gospels of the early centuries, and all the imaginative legends which have clustered about them. The inventions of man differ wholly from the dealings of God. In His designs there is no haste, no rest, no weariness, no discontinuity; all things are done by Him in the majesty of silence, and they are seen under a light that shineth quietly in the darkness, "showing all things in the slow history of their ripening." "The unfathomable depths of the Divine counsels," it has been said, "were moved; the fountains of the great deep were broken up; the healing of the nations was issuing forth; but nothing was seen on the surface of human society but this slight rippling of the water; the course of human things went on as usual, while each was taken up with little projects of his own."

How long the virgin mother and her holy Child stayed in this cave, or cattle-inclosure, we cannot tell, but probably it was not for long. The word rendered "manger," in Luke 2: 7, is of very uncertain meaning, nor can we discover more about it than that it means a place where animals were fed. It is probable that the crowd in the khan would not be permanent, and common humanity would have dictated an early removal of the mother and her child to some more appropriate resting-place. The Magi, as we see from St. Matthew, visited Mary "in the house." But on all these minor incidents the Gospels do not dwell. The fullest of them is St. Luke, and the singular sweetness of his narrative, its almost idyllic grace, its sweet calm tone of noble reticence, seem clearly to indicate that he derived it, though but in fragmentary notices, from the lips of Mary herself. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine from whom else it could have come, for mothers are the natural historians of infant years; but it is interesting to find, in the actual style, that "coloring of a woman's memory and a woman's views" which we should naturally have expected in confirmation of a conjecture so obvious and so interesting. Others might wonder, but in her all wonder was lost in the one overwhelming revelation—the one absorbing consciousness. Of such things she could not lightly speak; "she kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." The very depth and sacredness of that reticence is the natural and probable explanation of the fact that some of the details of the Saviour's infancy are fully recorded by St. Luke alone.—*From The Life of Christ by F. W. Farrar.*

FOLKS

It takes so little to make folks sad,
Just a slighting phrase or a thoughtless sneer,
Just a scornful look on some face held dear
And their footsteps lag, though the goal seemed near,
And they lose the courage and hope they had—
It takes so little to make folks sad.

It takes so little to make folks glad,
Just a cheering grip of a friendly hand,
Just a word from one who can understand,
And they tackle the task they long had planned
And they lose the fear and the doubt they had—
It takes so little to make folks glad.

—*William W. Lord, "The Greeter Poet"*

TREE PLANTING IN MILLIONS

To plant a tree is to do something that is usually well worth while. But to plant 2,500,000 of them at one time, and on barren lands, is doing a job that is indeed well worth while. And that tremendous number of fine little redwood seedlings was set out recently by 10 California lumber companies working together.

For years the noble redwoods have steadily fallen before the relentless axes of the lumbermen, leaving vast areas of dreary treeless wastes in their places. A few years ago the lumbermen awoke to the fact that the natural supply of redwoods could not last forever, so to insure lumber for the future they got together and began experiments in reforestation.

A trial start was made with a small nursery of only a few thousand trees. This proved successful and the work grew until now the lumber companies are carrying on the greatest private reforesting program in the United States. Three million young trees were raised from seeds this last year in nurseries located in three places. The aim is to set out at least 20 young trees for every old tree cut for lumber. They estimate that in the carrying out of this program fully as much new timber will be grown each year in the redwood belt as is cut for lumber.

But this making of barren logged-off lands to bear new forests will not only insure an adequate supply of redwood lumber for the future but will also do other fine things—conserve the rainfall and make dreary, denuded landscapes once more forested bowers of beauty as in days of old.

An English teacher said to her class, "'The cow is in the field'—what mood?"

A small boy answered, "The cow."

HEALTH TALK NO. 2

Water

Why drink so much water? Many people have asked this question, because they want to get thin, or because they are annoyed by perspiring, or both. They hope to achieve a willowy body with a conveniently dry skin, just by omitting water. Why, after all, drink so much of it? Why, indeed, drink any?

A friend of mine asked himself that question. The weather was muggy. He had to change undershirts twice a day; he didn't like the perspiration dropping off his nose. So he quietly cut out all water. The experiment worked like a charm. Within a day he had practically stopped perspiring. He didn't have to mop his forehead any more. But his head began to feel queer. Soon, indeed, he felt queer all over, so queer, so very queer that he staggered to the doctor, who cured him, of course, with water.

The fact is that our bodies are sixty to seventy per cent water. We get rid of water by the processes of nature; we breathe our water-vapor; we evaporate water from the whole surface of the body, every day and all day. If we didn't balance this loss by a good fluid intake, we should soon wither up. A one hundred and fifty-pound man, for instance, would shrink into a mere forty-five pound skeleton cased in a little dry flesh and a parchment skin. But before he had shrivelled nearly to that degree he would be dead. And again, long before that, he would be extremely constipated. His food would lie undigested in his stomach. In brief and in general he would be exceedingly ill. For fluid, and plenty of it, is absolutely necessary, not merely to maintain the proportion of H_2O in our bodily chemistry, but to keep down the bodily temperature by evaporation; to serve as a medium for digestion; and especially to help carry off the waste products of digestion and to save the kidneys from damaging over-work.

It is clear, isn't it, that we simply must have water. We can live thirty days or so with never a scrap of food. But after five days without water we simply curl up and die. As my friend found out, even one day without water is enough to poison us good and plenty.

We need fluid. We must have water, or its equivalent in milk, or soup, green vegetables and fruit or what not. There's no doubt about the need. But when do we need water? How much do we need? And what sort of water?

It is wise to drink a glass of water before turning in at night, and two glasses before breakfast each morning. That helps keep the bowels healthy. A glass before lunch and another before dinner serve to wash out the stomach. Water at meals is hygienic, too. Contrary to the current superstition, it does no harm, unless we use it to sluice down half chewed food. Tak between mouthfuls, it is more than harmless; it a necessary medium for the digestive processe and it enables the resulting nourishment to pa through the intestinal walls and into our bloo

How much water do we need? The avera healthy person will profit by anywhere betwe two to four quarts of fluid per day. The exa amount depends on the temperature and humi ity of the air, as well as on the amount of exerci we are taking. But there is no need of bei pernickety about it. The precise quanti doesn't matter. The point is this: make su you get enough. Make sure you get, as minimum, at least two quarts a day, and just much more as you want. For healthy peopl there is no danger of over-doing it.

Well, what about the kind of water that w drink? Is one sort better than another? Eve pure water varies, in its mineral content, fro place to place. One gets used to such variation Their importance is slight. What does reall matter is infection.

Bacteria live in water; they are transmitted b water, especially the bacteria of dysentery and typhoid fever. At home, you can easily find ou whether your town water supply is free fro bacteria. Remember that the most crystal-cle water may be "buggy" with infection. Bewar of water from wells within fifty feet of any priv Beware of water from streams and rivers in i habited country. It is the most elementary pr caution—the merest beginning of common sens —to boil all such water before drinking it, an even before using it to wash glasses or kitche utensils.

For the rest, our water-advice is simpl Drink plenty of it. Don't be afraid of fluids a meals. Drink two glasses of water before break fast; if convenient drink a glass before lunch an another before dinner; drink a glass before goin to bed. Be sure you drink no less than tw quarts a day—and beyond that, within reason Never fear; you won't get waterlogged.—*From Listen In, by Dr. Richard C. Cabot.*

TAKE JOY HOME

Take joy home,
And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her,
Then will she come and oft will sing to thee,
When thou art working in the furrows; ay,
Or weeding in the sacred heart of dawn.

It is a comely fashion to be glad:
Joy is the grace we say to God.
There is a rest remaining. Hast thou sinned?
There is a sacrifice. Lift up thy head:
The lovely world and the over world alike
Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede:
"Thy Father loves thee." —*Jean Ingelow.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. Henry R. Austin, 100 Elm Ave., Wollaston, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Austin, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 16 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

Those who enjoy receiving books and magazines are asked to remember that they, in their turn, can give much pleasure if they will take pains to write to the persons who send such reading matter. In cases where no word of response goes back—not even to say that the books or magazines were received—senders may suppose the parcels were not welcome. Let us each do our share.

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classics, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

OFFERS

For the following apply to Mrs. F. C. Brush, 29 High St., Montclair, N. J.

Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia, 1877, 4 vols.
Literature Primers—Green—English.
Science Primers: Physical Geography, Geology, Inventional Geometry.
Musical Composers and Their Works—Tytler.
A-B-C of Electricity—Meadowcroft.
Romantic Love and Personal Beauty—Finck.
Shirley—Currer Bell.
Watches on the Longships—Cobb.
Quaker Idyls—Gardner.
Montebank Diary—Lee.
Janice Meredith—Ford.
Barrier's Burned Away—Roe.
The Visits of Elizabeth.
Three Margarets—Laura Richards.
Jack the Chimney Sweeper—Mrs. Leslie.
Elizabeth or the Exiles of Siberia.
The Pioneer—Cooper.
The Pathfinder—Cooper.
The Last of the Mohicans—Cooper.
The Heart of Oak Books—Norton (3rd book).
Elsie and The Raymonds—Finley.
Elsie at the World's Fair—Finley.
My King—Havergal.
Conversations with Prince Bismarck—Poschinger.
Mind in the Making—Robinson.
Minstrel Weather—Storm.
Confessions of Artemas Quibble—Train.
Cargoes for Crusoes—Overton.
Stone-Millis Arithmetic—Primary.
Ancient History—Allen and Myers. Two vols. in one.
Mediaeval and Modern History—Myers.
Hymnal—Amore Dei.
Infant Praises (Songs for Sunday School).
The Packer Hymnal.
Addresses by Henry Drummond.
The Message of the Modern Minister—Jackson.
Conversations of Jesus Christ—Adams.

Natural Law in the Spiritual World—Drummond.
The Parents' Assistant—Maria Edgeworth.
Recompense—Klingle.
Age of Reason—Paine.
The Freedom of Life—Annie Payson Call.
Steps to Oratory—Southwick.
The Need of Change—Julian Street.
The Lapidaries—Mrs. Cheney.
The Perfectly Good Cynic's Calendar.
An Enchanted Ghost—Cassius Crisp.
Aunt Madge's Story—Sophie May.
The Girl Proposition—George Ade.
A Window in Thrums and Auld Licht Idylls—Barrie.
Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass—Carroll.
Among the Poets—A. A. Smith.
Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Browning—Copeland and Rideout.
Everlasting Mercy—Masefield.
How to Live on 24 Hours a Day—Arnold Bennett.
Tales of a Traveller.
Vicar of Wakefield and Rasselas—Goldsmith and Johnson.
Kingsley's Water Babies—Stickney.
Bible Text Book—American Tract Society.
Evil May-Day—E. Everett Green.
Elizabeth and Her German Garden.
The Little Children of the Luxembourg—Gibbons.
Essay on Burns—Carlyle.
Alhambra—Irving.
Life of Adoniram Judson—Edward Judson.
Poems of Lord Byron—Carpenter.
The Book of the Ancient Greeks—Dorothy Mills.
Modern Progress—West.
Impressions of South Africa—James Bryce.
Oom Paul's People—Hillegas.
Pitcher Pollock—Christy Mathewson.
Wrecked, Not Lost—Mrs. Dundas.
Ivanhoe—Scott.
Sohrab and Rustum—Arnold.
Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford—Chester.
Flowers of Fancy—Shelley.
Ready and Willing—American Tract Society.
Lalla Rookh—Moore.
The Gates Ajar—Phelps.
Tales of the Five Towns—Bennett.
Scott's Lady of the Lake—Ginn.
The True Citizen—Marwick and Smith.
Lucile—Meredith.
The Art of Optimism—Hyde.
Sermons and Songs of the Christian Life—Sears.
Psychology—William James.
The Odyssey—Homer.
The Three Clerks—Trollope.
Essay on Milton—Macaulay.
The Road to En-Dor—Jones.
The Witch's Head—Haggard.
Beauties of Tennyson.
The Blue Aunt—Eliza Orne White.
Our Bodies and How We Live—Blaisdell.
Don Quixote.
Ivanhoe—Scott.
The Castle of Roussillon—trans. by Sablier.
Preparations for Christianity—Nordell.
Electricity and Its Similitudes—Tyndall.
Photographic Instruction Text—Paltridge.
Grammar of Palmistry—Katharine St. Hill.
Vicar of Wakefield—Goldsmith.
Sketch Book—Irving.
A Christmas Carol—Dickens.
Brilliants—Gladstone.
Round My House—Hamerton.
Macaulay's Essay on Milton.
The Ways of the Planets—Martin.
The Hanging of the Crane and other Poems of the Home.
Twice Told Tales—Hawthorne.
Facts and Comments—Spencer.
Gray's Manual of Botany.
Mechanical Drawing—MacCord.
Two Years Ago—Kingsley.
A Cigarette-Maker's Romance—Crawford.
Memorial Life of William McKinley.
Fact and Fiction—Child.
An Introduction to Child Study—Drummond.
Hutchison's Physiology and Hygiene.
The Handy Speaker—Baker.
Collections of British Authors—The Initials—Baroness Tautphoens.
The Magic Story—Dey.

Paper Covered:

Age of Reason—Paine.
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—Stockton.
Selections from Prose and Poetic Writings of James Russell Lowell.
She Stoops to Conquer—Goldsmith.
The Dharma or The Religion of Enlightenment
Ixion in Heaven—Disraeli.
The Little Minister—Barrie.
Progress and Poverty—Henry George.
A-Hunting of the Deer—Warner.
The Beauty of Kindness—Miller.
The Greatest Thing in the World—Drummond
Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.
Felix Holt—George Eliot.
Palmistry—Martini.
Japanese Fairy Tales.

SCHOOL BOOKS

A Modern English Grammar—Buehler.
New Composition and Rhetoric—Herrick Damon.
First Book in Geography—Frye.
Plane Geometry—Wentworth and Smith.
Writing Latin—Book Two—Barss.
Practical Arithmetic—Wentworth and Hill.
The Stone-Millis Arithmetic.

Practical Arithmetic—Wentworth.
Ray's New Test Examples in Arithmetic—De Beck.
Complete Graded Arithmetic—Atwood.
Hiawatha Primer.
The Story of the Middle Ages—Harding.
Primary Arithmetic—Hornbrook.

REQUESTS

1. Miss Leona Brown, Bowie, Texas, R. 3, Box 3, would appreciate a good cookbook and the American Domestic Encyclopedia.

2. Mrs. Della Wright of Ferrum, Va., R. 2, a widow, would like reading matter for her six boys, ranging in age from eight to twenty-two years, also any reading suitable for herself.

3. Mrs. Lettie Whiteside of Myra, Texas, writes, asking for cheer from *Cheerful Letter* friends. She is now seventy-one years old and very needy.

4. Mrs. Hunt Rose, Tellico Plains, Tenn., R. 3, Box 87, has not heard from any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends for a long time. She would like reading matter for herself and husband, who is a young farmer, also pieces of material that can be used in making crocheted rugs. She would like, also, to have her aged mother, Mrs. W. R. Kelley, Tellico Plains, R. 2, Box 26, remembered with reading matter.

5. Mrs. Minnie Wilkey, Dayton, Tenn., R. 4, Box 185, writes that her little boy, Clarence, hopes that some of the *Cheerful Letter* people will remind Santa Claus of him in time for Christmas.

6. Mrs. J. W. Barker, Grassy Creek, N. C., a young wife with a little two-months-old baby, is one of the lonely ones and would appreciate any kind of cheer and reading matter.

7. Mrs. I. N. Haynes of Bassett, Va., would like to become a member of the *Cheerful Letter* family. She has six children, four little girls from seven years up, all in school. She would like anything to help the children in their work. She asks for old copies of the *Cheerful Letter* magazine for herself.

8. Will someone send Mrs. Melvina Kirby, Lilesville, N. C., Star Route, Box 26, a copy of Miss Alcott's "Little Women," or books by Mary J. Holmes or Gene Stratton Porter? Any of these would be much appreciated.

9. With thanks for past favors, I again ask to be remembered through the winter months, especially at Christmas. I have five boys, ages 17, 15, 12, 9, and one year. All would like to be remembered at Christmas. We will appreciate any cheer sent us, and some good reading for boys. Mrs. S. B. Hamner, Pedlar Mills, Va.

10. Mrs. Jestin Barker of Grassy Creek, N. C., has been sick all summer, and writes to the *Cheerful Letter*, asking for cheer. Anything will be appreciated.

11. Mrs. Lula Parter, Star Route, Appleton, Ark., would appreciate good story books and magazines, especially *Illustrated Companion*, *Good Stories*, and *Comfort* magazines. Also, would be glad if someone would send books, magazines, pictures and post cards for the kiddies. Their ages range from two to fifteen years. Anything sent will be welcome, as reading matter is hard to get.

12. I have a Sunday School class of young boys and girls, ages from ten to sixteen years. I would appreciate it very much if someone would send me *The Beacon*, or any other good story papers. I had some copies of *The Beacon* which a friend had sent me. I gave each one in the class a copy, and they told me they enjoyed the stories. I teach primary grades from the first to fifth. I would also like stories for them. They like fairy tales and animal stories. Christine Rea, Spencer, Va.

13. Mrs. Austin Cogburn, Leo, Cook Co., Texas, would like good reading for herself and cards for her little two-year-old girl, Joan by name.

14. Van Newton of Wadesboro, N. C., R. 1, Box 94, a boy of thirteen living on rented land, asks for suitable reading for himself, brother, aged seven, and his mother. Van would like to have some boy of his age write to him.

15. Mrs. Lottie Huneycutt, Richfield, N. C., sends grateful acknowledgments for past kindness, and asks for thread for her daughter, who has been in the hospital for a serious operation and will be able for a long time to do only light work, and thinks she would like to make a counterpane if she could get the thread. They will also be glad of light reading.

16. Mrs. Cordia Testerman, Lansing, N. C., a great sufferer and not able to do much work, will greatly appreciate any cheer sent her. A daughter, twelve, and son, six, are in school, which leaves her lonely. She would like *American Magazine*, old or new copies.

17. Mrs. Moore Altman, Wauchula, Fla., asks for material for teaching Nature Study and Health Education. Books on birds, flowers, and health bulletins will be much appreciated.

18. Miss Eva D. Turner, Dodson, Va., Box 13, living in a lonely mountain country, will be thankful for any good book or magazine.

19. Mrs. Lucy Jones, Bassett, Va., R. 3, writes of the death of her husband in September, and of her loneliness. She will be grateful for scraps, or anything to help pass the many lonely hours.

20. I want to thank all who have sent me school room help in the past, and ask for any books or magazines to help in my work again. I would be very glad to receive "The Normal Instructor" or "Primary Education," also any story books for our little library, which was sent

us by *Cheerful Letter* friends. I will teach the same little mountain school I have had charge of for two years, and which has been so very much benefited by *Cheerful Letter* aid. Mrs. Nora Carlton Howell, Boomer, R. F. D. 2, Box 68, N. C.

21. Miss Addie Eanes of Bassett, Va., R. 2 writes asking for embroidery thread and designs.

22. Miss Dell Purcell, Spencer, Va., is very nervous, and unable to write very much. She has asked me to write a letter of thanks to The Cheerful Letter Exchange, telling the kind ladies who have sent reading matter how much she appreciates their kindness. They have helped her pass many lonely hours. She asks for scraps for quilts and patch work. Her pastor is Rev. Crawford, Shuff, Va. Miss Purcell lives alone in a very lonely place. She needs lots of cheer, and will appreciate any kindness shown her. Christine Rea.

23. Mrs. M. L. Austin, and Miss Mary Lee Moore of Marshville, R. 5, N. C., ask for reading and scraps.

24. Yes, I would like very much to receive reading matter from the Cheerful Letter Exchange. I have received only what you sent me; no other from the exchange for years. I have three children, a boy 8 years, and girls 4 and 2 years, and would appreciate picture papers, story books, especially Bible Stories and fairy tales, for the children, and would be so glad of some good books and magazines for myself, that have been read.

Thanking you so very much for your past kindness, and hope to receive more reading from the Exchange in the future. Mrs. E. N. Wright, 1709 Staunton Ave., N. W., Roanoke, Va.

25. I have written to *Cheerful Letter* before, and received good reading. I would like very much to correspond with some of the *Cheerful Letter* friends, and receive any good reading. I am married and have four children. Mrs. Ed Lefler, 409 Depot St., Albemarle, N. C.

26. Dear friends: I wish to thank you all very much for your kindness. I cannot tell you how much happiness you have brought into our home. I have tried to send individual thanks to every one, but sometimes the addresses were torn off, so I could not tell who the sender was, so thank all through *The Cheerful Letter*. My health is very poor. I cannot do my house work much of the time, and I do appreciate reading books and papers; and oh, how thankful I am for the quilt pieces. I love to piece quilts very much, and I need them very bad. We have five girls, ages 2½ to 17, and all enjoy the things you send very much. The books have been a great help to our children, as we cannot buy the books they need. They learn a great deal out of the books you send. I am so glad to get all the things you all have sent me. I do appreciate them so much. Thank you again for your kindness; hope you all will remember me through the long cold winter. Love to all. Mrs. Margaret Johnson, R. D. 2, Box 83A, Whitetop, Va.

A PRAYER

Let me do my work each day, and if the
Darkened hours of despair overcome me,
May I not forget the strength that comforted
Me in the desolation of other times. May I
Still remember the bright hours that found me
Walking over the silent hills of my childhood,
Or dreaming on the margin of the quiet river,
When a light glowed within me
And I promised my early God to have
Courage amid the tempests of the changing years.
Spare me from the bitterness and sharp passion
Of unguarded moments. May I not forget
That poverty and riches are of the spirit.
Though the world knows me not,
May my thoughts and actions be such
As shall keep me friendly with myself.
Lift up my eyes from the earth and let me
Not forget the uses of the stars.
Forbid that I should judge others lest I condemn
myself,
Let me not feel the glamour of the world,
But walk calmly in my path. Give me
A few friends who will love me for what I am,
And keep ever burning before my vagrant steps
The kindly light of hope; and though
Age and infirmity overtake me, and I
Come not within sight of the castle of my dreams,
Teach me still to be thankful for life,
And for Time's olden moments that are
Good and sweet; and may the evening twilight
Find me gentle still. *Max Ehrmann.*

We Can Do Better

"We can do better than yet we have done,
And not be a whit the worse;
It never was loving that emptied the heart,
Nor giving that emptied the purse."

—*Young.*

IT PAYS TO TRY

My little son Johnny started for the country grocery store one morning with two pennies clasped in his chubby little hand.

For several moments he stood in front of the candy counter gazing at the sweets. When the clerk came to wait on him he called for many different kinds of the fancy bon-bons, and the clerk said, "Why, Johnny, you can't buy all that for two cents!"

"Well, I can try, can't I?" was Johnny's quick reply. And the clerk said you may be sure the boy came out with a well filled bag of candy.

THE THREE KINGS

THREE Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large, and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddlebows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of night, over hill and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast,
And sometimes talked as they paused to rest,
With the people they met at some wayside well.

"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,
"Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the Jews."

And the people answered, "You ask in vain;
We know of no king but Herod the Great!"
They thought the Wise Men were men insane,
As they spurred their horses across the plain,
Like riders in haste, and who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem,
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem,
And bring me tidings of this new king."

So they rode away; and the star stood still,
The only one in the gray of morn;
Yes, it stopped, it stood still of its own free will,
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David where Christ was born.

And the Three Kings rode through the gate and the guard,
Through the silent street, till their horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;
But the windows were closed, and the doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human but divine.

His mother Mary of Nazareth
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:
The gold was their tribute to a King,
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,
And sat as still as a statue of stone;
Her heart was troubled yet comforted,
Remembering what the Angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;
But they went not back to Herod the Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,
And returned to their homes by another way.

—*Henry W. Longfellow.*

A BOY said his father was smarter than George Washington.

"What, your father smarter than George Washington!"

"Yes, Dad is. Just yesterday I told my father I had not been fishing and he said he knew better and gave me a licking. Now George Washington could not tell a lie, but my father can tell a lie every time—you can't fool him!"

VINCENT was too garrulous. The school report to his father said, "Vincent talks too much."

Back came the report duly signed with this written in red ink, "You ought to hear his mother!"

A MINISTER was going to talk on "Peace" and arranged to have a boy climb up on the roof, and release a dove through a hole in the ceiling. When the proper moment came, no dove appeared. The minister looked up and waited, and suddenly the boy's head appeared at the hole, and a voice called "Say mister—the cat's et the dove. Will I throw down the cat?"

A LADY was making a deposit and seemed to be in doubt over something. When the teller finally received the deposit ticket it was made out: Bills: $30. Specie: Female.

A PAGE FOR THE CHILDREN

THE HISTORY OF ROBIN HOOD

PART II

Another old ballad tells of an adventure of Robin Hood with a friar, or monk, of Fountaine Abbey. Robin had been told of the monk's bravery, and that he could match him or any of his men; so he set out to challenge the monk to a trial at archery.

Near to Fountaine Dale he met the friar walking by the water side, and asked him if he would please carry him over the stream. Silently the monk took Robin on his shoulders and carried him over to the other side without speaking; but when the outlaw had jumped off on to dry land, the friar insisted upon Robin's ferrying him back in like manner. This could not well be refused; but when they came again to the bank, Robin, determined to get the better of the cunning friar, begged him to carry him over once more.

The friar again started with Robin on his back; but when they came to the middle of the stream upset his load into the water, bidding him to take care of himself. Robin swam to the shore first, and then let fly one of his best arrows at the monk in the water. However, the friar was well protected by his steel armor, and Robin shot away all his arrows without harming him in the least. When all his arrows were gone, he drew his sword upon the monk, who knew well also how to use his own, and they fought a long time, until Robin was glad to beg the favor of a breathing spell.

"Let me blow three blasts on my horn," he asked, which being granted, the sound soon brought fifty or sixty outlaws to the spot, much to the monk's astonishment.

"Grant me also a favor," claimed the friar, and Robin could not in honor refuse, the monk having so willingly granted his own request. So he was allowed to whistle three times, upon which a great herd of large and fierce dogs came running to answer their master's call.

Two of the dogs tore Robin Hood's coat off his back, and the others kept watch for his men's arrows, catching them in their mouths as fast as they were shot at the monk. At last Little John, who was a splendid marksman, took aim at the dogs themselves and soon dispatched a large number of them. The friar, not liking the idea of losing his valuable animals, cried out to him to suspend operations until he and Robin could come to terms.

Robin finally promised the monk that if he would give up the abbey and leave the neighborhood, he should in return be paid a certain sum of money weekly, and given a new suit of clothes on every holiday; and this being agreed to, the friar was allowed to go on his way.

The sheriff and other officers of the law were constantly contriving some trick by which to entrap Robin Hood; but nothing seemed to succeed. Once they prepared a match at archery, in which every one in the kingdom might join, the best archer to win the prize—a golden arrow with a silver shaft. This prize he felt sure would induce some of the outlaws to try their fortunes, and thus he hoped to secure them.

On the appointed day a large number came to take part in the sport, and among them came Robin and many of his men, all dressed in different styles and colors to avoid suspicion; and they so mixed with the crowd that none could distinguish them from the other archers.

At last the match was ended and a certain man in a red suit was called up to receive the prize—the sheriff little thinking it was Robin Hood himself. In fact, he felt much disappointed that none of the robbers had come to engage in the sport; and hence he was grieving and scolding at his poor success, at the very time that bold Robin and his men were rejoicing in the forest over their good fortunes.

But Robin could not rest till the sheriff knew who had gained the prize arrow. Accordingly he wrote a letter stating the facts. This he fastened to the head of an arrow, and sent it from his powerful bow away into the middle of the town, where some one picked it up and delivered it to the owner, the sheriff of Nottingham, who speedily read it, tore his hair, and raved like a madman to think that he had been outwitted by the robber chieftain he had taken such pains to capture.

As time wore on, the depredations of these outlaws became so numerous, so daring, and so wholly outrageous, that the king at length published a decree that whoever would bring Robin Hood to him should have one thousand marks in gold as a reward. As a result, many companies of strong men were sent out to capture bold Robin and his band. But so winning was the outlaw leader's manner towards them that Robin generally escaped without even a fight; and many who came as his enemies stayed behind as his friends. Thus his band was constantly increasing instead of diminishing.

At last he grew tired of this way of living, and indeed he was now growing to be an old man, not able to fight as he did in his younger days. Therefore he sent a letter to the king offering to surrender himself and promising to live quietly if he could be pardoned for his past offenses. This letter was put upon an arrowhead, and

Robin shot it far away into the town of Nottingham, where the king was. But before the king's answer came bold Robin Hood was no more!

According to the old stories and ballads, when his men heard that he had applied for pardon, they grew fearful of capture, having little hope of the king's mercy, and nearly all deserted him forthwith, causing Robin so much distress that he became quite ill and soon after died; but whether from the illness, or through treachery, no one is quite certain.

His was a wild, barbarous age, when outlawry was a common thing and human life in constant peril. Indeed, so lax were the morals of the day that personal courage and deeds of daring were held in higher esteem than either law or religion. Therefore it is little wonder that bold Robin Hood and his "merrie men" were extravagantly admired, even by those who used all wiles and strategies to capture them. Little wonder either that—with the mysterious wilds of Sherwood Forest as an appropriate and romantic background—Robin Hood, the prince of outlaws, became the hero of the most popular tales and ballads, fragments of which have survived through the centuries which lie between that age and our own, and are still read with interest—so universal and enduring is the respect felt for genuine bravery.—*Treasury of Fairy Tales.*

WITH OUR HOME-KEEPERS

Favorite Receipts

Pop Overs.—One pint of flour, 1 pint of milk, 2 eggs beaten to a froth. Mix quickly, and bake in hot buttered cups. Serve with hot sauce.

Rye and Indian Johnny Cake.—Two cupfuls of rye, 2 cupfuls of Indian meal, 1 small teaspoonful of soda, a little salt. Sufficient sour milk to make a stiff batter. Bake in a cake on a griddle. Split open and butter, then send to the table hot.

Pineapple Pie.—Pare and grate a large pineapple and to every teacupful of grated pineapple add half a teacupful of granulated sugar. Turn the pineapple and sugar into dishes lined with crust. Put a strip of the crust around the dish, cover the pie with crust, wet and press together the edges. Cut a slit in the center of the cover, through which the vapor may escape. Bake 30 minutes.

Coffee Tapioca Pudding.—Stir into 3 cups hot coffee, ½ cup minute tapioca (or the same amount of pearl tapioca soaked over night), ½ cup sugar, and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook in double boiler about 25 minutes. Serve with whipped cream in sherbet glasses.

Handy Hints

To Prevent Thread From Knotting.—To prevent cotton from knotting, always thread the loose end through the needle and not the end broken off the spool.

When Packing Silver.—To keep silver from tarnishing, put a few pieces of camphor in the drawer in which it is kept.

Shelling Boiled Eggs for Salad.—After boiling the eggs hard, dip them in cold water; this gives a good color. Roll the eggs between the hands to soften the shells, which can then be removed easily.

To Stone Raisins.—When stoning raisins, pour boiling water over them and leave them for a short time. Then squeeze out the seeds at the stem end. This prevents waste.

When Scissors Are Loose.—To tighten scissors, place a red-hot poker on the rivet at each side.

Cornstarch will remove grease stains from cloth. Rub a little dry cornstarch into the soiled places and it will at once begin to absorb the grease. Brush the first used off carefully and proceed in same way until the spot disappears.

Lettuce washed thoroughly in cold water and placed in a granite pan with a tight cover or in a paper bag with the top folded over tightly will remain crisp and fresh for several days and always be ready when needed.

Make bags of cheesecloth in which to put small pieces of soap. Oatmeal added to the soap when used in the bath makes the skin soft and smooth.

Your rubbers will last longer if you put a half-inch layer of crushed tissue paper into the heels. The paper forms a soft cushion for the hard heel of the shoe and thus lessens the wear on the rubber.

UNDERSTOOD

I know I do not trust Thee, Lord, enough.
To-morrow, if the pathway grew too rough
For my weak feet to travel, I should pause,
And murmur that Thy face was hid because
I cannot see Thee in a darkened place,
I need the sunshine to behold Thy face.
I do not trust Thee, Lord. Then patient, mild,
He answered lovingly, "I know it, child."

My heart is cold against Thee, then I cried,
If Thou to-day wert walking by my side,
If Thou and I were walking by the sea,
And Thou shouldst whisper softly, "Follow me,"
Those words the centuries have found so sweet,
I think that I should rise with lagging feet,
My heart would feel no rapture quick and wild.
Again He answered, "Yes, I know it, child."

I am not constant, Lord, I am not true,
The things I would not are the things I do.
I am so weary, there are clouds between,
My words are harsher, wilder than I mean.
Not over pastures smooth, but rock and stone,
I walked today, and I have weary grown.
More softly, tenderly than angel's call,
The Saviour answered, "Child, I know it all."

Bertha Gerneaux Davis,
New York Observer.

SANDMAN

THERE is a man comes to our house,
When evening clouds the sky;
I think he comes because he hears
Our mother's lullaby.

A creepy, sleepy man he is,
With poppies in his cap;
He slips across the nurs'ry sill,
He doesn't pause to rap.

He carries, in his hand, a bag
Of soft sand that he scatters;
And when that sand has touched our eyes,
Well, nothing really matters.

His pockets bulge with lovely dreams,
All colored blue and red;
He tosses them, like blossom buds,
About each little bed.

And, O, his smile is very kind,
And very warm and bright;
And, though he doesn't speak a word,
He wishes us, "Good Night!"

There is a man comes to our house,
When evening clouds the sky;
I think he comes because he loves
Our mother's lullaby.

—*Margaret Sangster*

"THERE are two things about which one sho
never worry—that which cannot be helped a
that which can be."

THE stingy farmer was scorning his hired m
for carrying a lantern when he went to call
his girl.

"Why when I went to call on my girl I w
in the dark," said the farmer.

"Yes, and just look what you got," said
hired man.—*Univ. of Neb. Awgwan.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of lett
and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of cor
spondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good serm
or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present o
such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheer
Letter Exchange, 16 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made paya
to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents*, should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Wa
Quincy, Mass.

3. *Letters asking for books, magazines, cards, etc.*, also letters offering to give books and magazin
should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Austin, 100 Elm Ave., Wollaston, Mass.

4. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimb
Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by st
dents either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where he
is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

5. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Steve
26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location a
care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and fifty-nine librari
are now on our lists.

6. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mas
should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from othe
interested in the organization and its methods.

RUMFORD PRE
CONCORD